

INTRODUCTION

The incumbent serves as a Technician for Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). This position performs routine inspections and conducts other activities to support the accomplishment of the Agriculture Quarantine Inspection (AQI) program.

The incumbent performs a variety routine tasks, using independent judgment to determine which problems can be handled and which should be referred to a higher level of professional employee.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Enforces Federal and/or State agricultural quarantines which restrict the movement of plants, plant products, animal products, animal by-products and equipment into or out of foreign and domestic regulated areas. Activities may include, but are not limited to, inspection of means of conveyance, cargo, passengers (including profiling), pedestrians, baggage, interdiction activities, screening packages in mail facilities, and miscellaneous articles. They are responsible for the routine inspection of vessels (reboarding) and aircraft for restricted or prohibited agricultural commodities, by-products, contaminants and pests that are potentially dangerous to the nation's agriculture.

Assists professional staff in inspecting regulated cargo. Suspected infested materials are reported to a PPQ officer for final determination. Prohibited material is seized and disposed of in accordance with established procedures. Seals and safeguards prohibited, restricted, or infested commodities as directed by officers. Inspects low risk cargo under the supervision of a higher graded employee. Supervises industry personnel, or may perform the cleaning and disinfection of contaminated articles, and transfer of cargo as necessary following established procedures.

Responsible for safeguarding and transporting quarantine material interceptions (QMI's). Incumbent examines QMI's for suspect agricultural pests and refers suspects to a professional employee for identification and submission.

Records items of interest on inspection reports that should be held for further inspection. Collects and records data, and maintains daily records outlining findings, such as treatments, inspection results, interdiction activities and regulatory procedures. Prepares reports on such activities and other accomplishments within assigned unit area.

Assembles, maintains, baits, installs, and collects insect traps. Prepares simple reports/maps regarding same.

FACTOR 1, KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Basic knowledge of plant quarantine and regulatory procedures to enforce Federal and/or State agricultural quarantines is required. This includes knowledge of the principles of biological science to recognize various agricultural commodities, (fruit and vegetable identification), plant pests, and conditions (unsafe guarded animal by-products) that may have adverse effects on agricultural production.

Ability to interpret data such as airline schedules, deferred boarding list, list of regulated commodities, garbage logs, incinerator logs, etc., to establish priorities for and conduct routine inspection. Knowledge of pest risks and its relationship to the above will permit the incumbent to make sound biological decisions.

FACTOR 2, SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Incumbent works under the general and technical supervision of a Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer who assigns and reviews work. Assignments are routine and are usually given on a continuous basis. In some locations supervision may be provided by a lead technician.

Routine work is performed independently, work is reviewed by occasional spot checks. New or unusual problems are referred to a PPQ Officer for solution or decision.

FACTOR 3, GUIDELINES

Guides consist of manuals, (maritime and airport operation manual, animal products manual, local standard operations manual, export certification manuals) oral and written instructions, and program data and inspection results which will direct the technician to the proper course of action.

Due to the number of guides the incumbent must use judgment to select and interpret the most appropriate guide.

FACTOR 4, COMPLEXITY

The incumbent performs a variety of routine mission-related duties ranging from profiling of passengers to reboarding of vessels. Procedures for accomplishing stated objectives are regular and recurring; a wide range of rotational duties (cargo, baggage, mail, etc.) may be required of the incumbent.

The technician often resolves minor problems independently and exercises judgement in planning and organizing tasks to be performed.

FACTOR 5, SCOPE AND EFFECT

The purpose of the work is to conduct routine inspection activities that contribute to an effective pest exclusion program.

Successful accomplishment of duties will help prevent the introduction of foreign pests and diseases. The establishment of these pests and diseases would have a significant economic impact on regulated industries and American agriculture.

FACTOR 6, PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with the general public, importers, exporters, employees of Federal and State enforcement agencies and others involved in the import and export of agricultural products.

FACTOR 7, PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Contacts are primarily to exchange basic information regarding PPQ methods, procedures and to enforce regulations. Serves as first point of contact with individuals who are often not aware of the plant regulatory requirements involving international travel. These contacts often become confrontational, requiring diplomacy and tact in order to ensure compliance.

FACTOR 8, PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Duties are performed while sitting, standing, walking. The incumbent is required to crouch, stoop, stretch and bend. Moderately heavy lifting may be required. Occasional walking on sometimes slippery and uneven surfaces and climbing will be required while inspecting cargo and conveyances. A valid driver's license is required.

FACTOR 9, WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment includes cargo areas, vehicle and passenger inspection areas, airport ramps, maritime docks, etc. Periods of outdoor work may be required in snow, rain, or extreme heat or cold. The work involves the use of toxic chemicals, pesticides and fumigants. Protective clothing may be required such as hard hats, gloves, goggles, or masks. Excessive noise may be present in the work area. May work rotating shifts, including nights, holidays and weekends.